

B. Y. Green.

THE
GRAVE.

A
POEM.

BY ROBERT BLAIR.

THE HOUSE APPOINTED FOR ALL LIVING. JOB.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A

COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.

BY MR GRAY.

ALNWICK:

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THE
GRAVE.

A
POEM.

WHIEST some affect the sun, and some the shade,
Some flee the city, some the hermitage;
Their aims as various, as the roads they take
In journeying thro' life;—the task be mine
To paint the gloomy horrors of the TOMB;
Th' appointed place of rendezvous, Where all
These travellers meet.—Thy succors I implore,
Eternal king! whose potent arm sustains
The keys of hell and death.—The GRAVE, dread
thing!

Men shiver when thou'rt nam'd: Nature appal'd,
Shakes off her wonted firmness.—Ah! how dark
Thy long-extended realms, and rueful wastes!
Where nought but Silence reigns, and Night dark
Night,

Dark as was CHAOS, ere the infant Sun
Was roll'd together, or had try'd his beams
Athwart the gloom profound.—The sickly taper,
By glimm'ring thro' thy low brow'd misty vaults,
(Furr'd round with mouldy damps, and ropy slime,)
Lets fall a supernumerary horror,
And only serves to make thy night more irksome.
Well do I know thee by thy trusty YEW,
Chearless, unsocial plant; that loves to dwell
'Midst skulls and coffins, epitaphs and worms:

THE GRAVE.

Where light-heel'd ghosts, and visionary shades,
Beneath the wan cold moon (as fame reports)
Embodv'd, thick, perform their mystic rounds.
No other merriment, dull tree, is thine.

SEE yonder hallow'd Fane;—the pious work
Of names once fam'd, now dubious or forgot,
And bury'd 'midst the wreck of things which were;
There lye interr'd the more illustrious dead.
The wind is up: hark! how it howls! Methinks
Till now I never heard a sound so dreary:
Doors creak, and windows clap, and night's foul
bird,

Rook'd in the spire, screams loud: the gloomy isles
Black plaister'd, and hung round with shreds of
'scutcheons

And tatter'd coats of arms, send back the sound
Laden with heavier airs, from the low vaults,
The mansions of the dead.—Rous'd from their
slumbers,

In grim array the grisly spectres rise,
Grin horrible, and obstinately sullen,
Pass and repass, hush'd as the foot of Night.
Again the screech owl shrieks: ungracious sound!
I'll hear no more, it makes one's blood run chill.

QUITE round the pile, a row of reverend elms,
(Coæval near with that,) all ragged shew,
Long lash'd by the rude winds. Some rift half
down

Their branchless trunks; others so thin a top,
That scarce two crows can lodge in the same tree.
Strange things, the neighbours say, have happen'd
here:

Wild shrieks have issued from the hollow tombs:
Dead men have come again and walk'd about;

A POEM.

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And the great bell has toll'd, unring, untouch'd.
(Such tales their chear at Wake or Gossoping,
When it draws near to witching time of night.

OFt, in the lone church-yard at night I've seen,
By glimpse of moon shine chequering thro' the trees
The school boy with his satchel in his hand,
Whistling aloud to bear his courage up,
And lightly tripping o'er the long flat stones,
(With nettles skirted, and with moss o'er grown,))
That tell in homely phrase who lye below.
Sudden he starts, and hears, or thinks he hears
The sound of something purring at his heels ;
Full fast he flies, and dares not look behind him,
Till out of breath he overtakes his fellows ;
Who gather round, and wonder at the tale
Of horrid APPARITION, tall and ghastly,
That walks at dead of night, or takes his stand
O'er some new open'd grave ; and (strange to tell!)
Evanishes at crowing of the cock.

THE new made WIDOW, too, I've sometimes
'spy'd,
Sad sight! slow moving o'er the prostrate dead :
Listless, she crawls along in doleful black,
Whilst bursts of sorrow gush from either eye,
Fast falling down her now untasted cheek.
Prone on the lowly grave of the dear man
She drops ; Whilst busy meddling Memory,
In barbarous succession musters up
The past endearments of their softer hours,
Tenacious of its theme. Still, still she thinks
She sees him, and indulging the fond thought,
Clings yet more closely to the senseless turf,
Nor heeds the passenger who looks that way.

INVIDIOUS GRAVE!—how dost thou rend in sunder

Whom Love has knit, and Sympathy made one?
 A tie more stubborn far than Nature's band.
 FRIENDSHIP! mysterious cement of the soul;
 Sweetener of life, and soldier of society,
 I owe thee much. Thou hast deserv'd from me,
 Far, far beyond what I can ever pay.
 Oft have I prov'd the labours of thy love,
 And the warm efforts of the gentle heart,
 Anxious to please.—Oh! when my friend and I
 In some thick wood have wander'd heedless on,
 Hid from the vulgar eye, and sat us down
 Upon the sloping cowslip-cover'd bank,
 Where the pure limpid stream has slid along
 In grateful errors thro' the under-wood,
 Sweet murmuring; methought the shrill tongu'd
 Thrush

Mended his song of love; the sooty Black bird
 Mellow'd his pipe, and soften'd every note:
 The Eglantine smell'd sweeter, and the Rose
 Assum'd a dye more deep; whilst every flower
 Vied with its fellow plant in luxury
 Of dress.—Oh! then, the longest summer's day
 Seem'd too, too much in haste: still the full heart
 Had not imparted half: 'twas happiness
 Too exquisite to last. Of joys departed,
 Not to return, how painful the remembrance!

DULL GRAVE—thou spoil'st the dance of youthful blood,

Strik'st out the dimple from the cheek of Mirth
 And ev'ry smirking feature from the face;
 Branding our LAUGHTER with the name of MADNESS
 Where are the JESTER now? the men of health

A POEM.

Y

Complexionally pleasant? Were the DROLL,
Whose ev'ry look and gesture was a joke
To clapping theatres and shouting crowds,
And made ev'n thick-lip'd musing melancholy
To gather up her face into a smile
Before she was aware; Ah! sullen now,
And dumb as the green turf that covers them.

WHERE are the mighty thunderbolts of war?
The ROMAN CÆSARS, and the GRECIAN CHIEFS,
The boast of story? Where the hot brain'd youth;
Who the TIARA at his pleasure tore
From Kings of all the then discover'd globe;
Andery'd, forsooth, because his arm was hamper'd,
And had not room enough to do its work?
Alas! how slim, dishonourably slim,
And cram'd into a space we blush to name!
Proud ROYALTY! how alter'd in thy looks!
How blank thy features, and how wan thy hue!
SON OF THE MORNING! whither art thou gone!
Where hast thou hid thy many spangled head,
And the majestic menance of thine eyes
Felt from afar? Pliant and powerless now,
Like new-born infant wound up in his swathes,
Or victim tumbled flat upon its back,
That throbs beneath the sacrificer's knife.
Mute, must thou bear the strife of little tongues,
And coward insults of the base-born crowd;
That grudge a privilege thou never hadst,
But only hop'd for in the peaceful GRAVE,
Of being unmolested and alone.
ARABIA's gums and odoriferous drugs,
And honours by the HERALDS duly paid
In mode and form, ev'n to a very scruple;
Oh cruel IRONY! these come too late;

And only mock, whom they were meant to honour.
 Surely there's not a dungeon-slave that's bury'd
 In the high-way, unshrouded and uncoffin'd,
 But lyes as soft, and sleeps as sound as he.
 Sorry pre-eminence of high descent,
 Above the vulgar born, to rot in state.

BUT see! the well-plum'd HEARSE comes nod-
 ding on

Stately and slow; and properly attended
 By the whole sable tribe, that painful watch
 The sick man's door, and live upon the dead,
 By letting out their persons by the hour,
 To mimic sorrow, when the heart's not sad.
 How rich the trappings? now they're all unfurl'd,
 And glittering in the sun; triumphant entries
 Of Conquerors, and Cornation-pomps,
 In glory scarce exceed. Great gluts of people
 Retard th' unwieldy show; whilst from the case-
 ments

And houses tops, ranks behind ranks close wedg'd
 Hang bellying o'er. But tell us, why this waste
 Why this ado in earthing up a carcase
 That's fall'n into disgrace, and in the nostril
 Smells horrible?—Ye UNDERTAKERS, tell us,
 'Midst all the gorgeous figures you exhibit,
 Why is the principal conceal'd, for which
 You make this mighty stir.—'Tis wisely done:
 What would offend the eye in a good picture,
 The painter casts discreetly into shades.

PROUD LINEAGE, now how little thou appear'st
 Below the envy of the private man.
 Honour, that meddlesome officious ill,
 Pursues thee ev'n to death; nor there stops short:

A POEM.

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Strange persecution! when the GRAVE itself
Is no protection from rude sufferance.

ABSURD to think to over-reach the GRAVE,
And from the wreck of names to rescue ours.
The best concerted schemes men lay for fame
Die fast away: only themselves die faster.
'The far-fam'd SCULPTOR, and the laurell'd BARD,
'Those bold insurers of deathless fame,
Supply their little feeble aids in vain.
The tapering Pyramid, th' Ægyptian's pride,
And wonder of the world, whose spiky top
Has wounded the thick cloud, and long outliv'd
'The angry shaking of the winter's storm;
Yet spent at last by th' injuries of heaven,
Shatter'd with age, and furrow'd o'er with years,
The mystic cone with hieroglyphics crusted,
At once gives way. Oh! lamentable sight:
'The labour of whole ages, lumbers down,
A hideous and mishapen length of ruins.
Sepulchral columns wrestle but in vain
With all-subduing Time: her cank'ring hand
With calm delib'rate malice wasteth them:
Worn on the edge of days the brass consumes,
The Busto moulders, and the deep cut marble,
Unsteady to the steel, give up its charge.
AMBITION, half convicted of her folly,
Hangs down the head, and reddens at the tale.

HERE all the mighty TROUBLES OF THE EARTH,
Who swam to sov'reign rule thro' seas of blood;
'Th' oppressive, sturdy, man-destroying Villains,
Who ravag'd kingdoms and laid empires waste,
And in a cruel wantonness of power
'Thin'd states of half their people, and gave up
To want the rest; now, like a storm that's spent,

Lye hush'd, and meanly sneak behind the covert.
 Vain thought! to hide them from the gen'ral scorn
 That haunts and doggs them like an injur'd ghost
 Implacable.—Here too the PETTY TYRANT,
 Whose scant domains GEOGRAPHER ne'er notic'd
 And, well for neighbouring grounds, of arms short,
 Who fix'd his iron talons on the poor,
 And gripp'd them like some lordly beast of prey;
 Deaf to the forceful cries of gnawing Hunger,
 And piteous plaintive voice of Misery;
 (As if a SLAVE was not a shred of nature,
 Of the same common nature with his Lord);
 Now tame and humble, like a child that's whipp'd,
 Shakes hands with dust, and calls the worm his
 kinsman;

Nor pleads his rank and birthright. Underground
 PRECEDENCY's a jest; Vassal and Lord,
 Grossly familiar, side by side consume.

WHEN self esteem, or others adulation,
 Would cunningly persuade us we were something
 Above the common level of our kind,
 The GRAVE gainsays the smooth complexion'd
 flatt'ry,
 And with blunt truth acquaints us what we are.

BEAUTY—thou pretty play thing, dear deceit,
 That steals so softly o'er the stripling's heart,
 And gives it a new pulse, unknown before,
 The GRAVE discredits thee: thy charms expung'd,
 Thy roses faded, and thy lilies soil'd,
 What hast thou more to boast of? Will thy Lovers
 Flock round thee now, to gaze and do thee homage?
 Methinks I see thee with thy head now laid,
 Whilst suffeted upon thy damask cheek
 The high-fed Worm, in lazy volumes roll'd,

Riots unscar'd.—For this, was all thy caution?
 For this, they painful labours at thy glass?
 'T' improve those charms, and keep them in repair,
 For which the spoiler thanks thee not. Foul feeder,
 Coarse fare and carrion please thee full as well,
 And leave as keen a relish on the sense.
 Look how the fair one weeps!—the conscious tears
 Stand thick as dew drops on the bells of flow'rs:
 Honest effusion! the swoln heart in vain
 Works hard to put a gloss on its distress.

STRENGTH too—thou surly, and less gentle boast-
 Of those that loud laugh at the village ring;
 A fit of common sickness pulls the down
 With greater ease, than e'er thou didst the strip-
 pling

That rashly dar'd thee to th' unequal fight.
 What groan was that I heard?—deep groan indeed
 With anguish heavy laden; let me trace it:
 From yonder bed it comes, where the strong man,
 By stronger arm belabour'd, gasps for breath
 Like a hard-hunted beast. How his great heart
 Beats thick! his roomy chest by far too scant
 'To give the lungs full play.—What now avail
 The strong built sinewy limbs, and well-spread
 shoulders?

See how he tugs for life, and lays about him,
 Mad with his pain!—Eager he catches hold
 Of what comes next to hand, and grasps it hard,
 Just like a creature drowning; hideous sight!
 Oh! how his eyes stand out, and stare full ghastly!
 Whilst the distemper's rank and deadly venom
 Shoots like a burning arrow cross his bowels,
 And drinks his marrow up.—Heard you that groan
 It was his last.—See how the great GOLIATH,

Just like a child that brawl'd itself to rest,
Lies still.—What mean'st thou then, O mighty
Boaster,

To vaunt of nerves of thine? What means the Bull,
Unconscious of his strength; to play the coward,
And flee before a feeble thing like man;
That, knowing well the slackness of his arm,
Thrusts only in the well-invented knife?

WITH STUDY pale, and midnight vigils spent,
The star-surveying SAGE close to his eye
Applies the sight-invigorating 'Tube;
And travelling thro' the boundless length of space,
Marks well the course of the far-seen orbs
That roll with regular confusion there,
In ecstasy of thought. But ah! proud man,
Great heights are hazardous to the weak head;
Soon, very soon thy firmest footing fails;
And down thou drop'st into that darksome place,
Where NOR DEVICE NOR KNOWLEDGE ever came,

HERE the 'TONGUE-WARRIOR lies disabled now,
Disarm'd, dishonour'd, like a wretch that's gagg'd
And cannot tell his ails to passers by.
Great men of language,—whence this mighty change
This dumb despair, and drooping of the head?
Tho' strong Persuasions hung upon thy lip,
And fly Insinuation's softer arts
In ambush lay about thy flowing Tongue;
Alas! how chop fall'n now? Thick mists and silence
Rest, like a weary cloud, upon thy breast
Unceasing.—Ah! where is the lifted arm,
The strength of action, and the force of words,
The well-turn'd period, and the well-tun'd voice,
With all the lesser ornaments of Phrase?
Ah! fled for ever, as they ne'er had been,

Raz'd from the book of Fame: or, more provoking,
 Perchance some hackney hunger-bitten Scribbler
 Insults thy memory, and blots thy tomb
 With long flat narrative, or duller rhimes,
 With heavy halting pace that drawl along;
 Enough to rouse a dead man into rage,
 And warm with red resentment the wan cheek.

HERE the great masters of the HEALING-ART,
 These mighty mock defrauders of the TOMB,
 Spite of their JULEPS and CATHOLICONS
 Resign to Fate,—Proud ÆSCULAPIUS' son!
 Where are thy boasted implements of Art,
 And all thy well cramm'd magazines of Health;
 Nor hill nor vale, as far as ship could go,
 Nor margin of the gravel-bottom'd brook,
 Escap'd thy rifling hand:—from stubborn shrubs
 Thou wrung'st their shy retiring Virtues out,
 And vex'd them in the fire: nor fly nor insect,
 Nor writhy-snake, escap'd thy deep research.
 But why this APPARATUS? why this cost?
 Tell us, thou doughty keeper from the GRAVE,
 Where are thy RECIPES and CORDIALS now,
 With the long list of vouchers for thy cures?
 Alas! thou speakest not.—The bold impostor
 Looks not more silly, when the cheat's found out.

HERE the lank-sided MISER, worst of felons
 Who meanly stole, (discreditable shift,)
 From back, and belly too, their proper cheer,
 Eas'd of a tax it irk'd the wretch to pay
 To his own carcase; now lies cheaply lodg'd,
 By clam'rous Appetites no longer teaz'd,
 Nor tedious Bills of charges and repairs.
 But ah! where are his rents, his comings in?

B.

Ay! now you've made the rich man poor indeed?
 Robb'd of his Gods, what has he left behind?
 Oh cursed lust of Gold; when for thy sake,
 'The fool throws up his int'rest in both worlds:
 First starv'd in this, then damn'd in that to come.

How shocking must thy summons be, O DEATH!
 'To him that is at ease in his possessions;
 Who counting on long years of pleasure here,
 Is quite unfurnish'd for that world to come?
 In that dread moment, how the frantic Soul
 Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,
 Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,
 But shrieks in vain!—How wishfully she looks
 On all she's leaving, now no longer her's!
 A little longer, yet a little longer,
 Oh! might she stay, to wash away her stains,
 And fit her for her passage.—Mournful sight!
 Her very eyes weep blood;—and every Groan
 She heaves is big with horror.—But the Foe,
 Like a staunch murd'rer, steady to his purpose,
 Pursues her close thro' every lane of life,
 Nor misses once the tract, but presses on;
 'Till forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,
 At once she sinks to everlasting ruin.

SURE 'tis a serious thing to DIE! My soul,
 What a strange moment must it be, when near
 Thy journey's end, thou hast the gulf in view!
 That awful gulf, no mortal e'er repass'd
 To tell what's doing on the other side.
 Nature runs back, and shudders at the sight,
 And every life-string bleeds at thoughts of parting;
 For part they must: BODY and SOUL must part;
 Fond couple; link'd more close than wedded pair.
 THIS wings its way to its almighty Source,

The Witness of its actions, now its judge;
 THAT drops into the dark and noisome GRAVE,
 Like a disabled pitcher of no use.

IF Death was nothing, and nought after death;
 If when men dy'd, at once they ceas'd to be,
 Returning to the barren womb of Nothing,
 Whence first they sprung, then might the De-
 bauchee

Untrembling mouth the Heavens: Then might
 the Drunkard

Reel over his full bowel, and; when 'tis drain'd,
 Fill up another to the brim, and laugh
 At the poor bugbear DEATH:—Then might the
 wretch

That's weary of the world, and tir'd of life,
 At once give each inquietude the slip,
 By stealing out of being when he pleas'd,
 And by what way; whether by hemp or steel;
 DEATH'S THOUSAND DOORS stand open.—Who
 could force

The ill pleas'd guest to sit out his full time,
 Or blame him if he goes?—Sure he does well,
 That helps himself as timely as he can,
 When able.—But if there's an HEREAFTER
 And that there is, Conscience, uninfluenc'd
 And suffer'd to speak out, tells ev'ry man;
 Then must it be an awful thing to DIE:
 More horrid yet to die by one's own hand.
 SELF-MURDER!—name it not: our Island's shame:
 That makes her the reproach of neighbouring
 states.

Shall Nature, swerving from her earliest dictate
 Self-preservation, fall by her own act?
 Forbid it Heaven.—Let not, upon disgust

The shameless hand be fully crimson'd o'er
 With blood of its own lord.—Dreadful attempt!
 Just reeking from self slaughter, in a rage
 To rush into the presence of our judge;
 As it we challeng'd him to do his worst,
 And matter'd not his wrath! Unheard of tortures
 Must be reserv'd for such: these herd together;
 The common damn'd shun their society,
 And look upon themselves as Fiends less foul.
 Our time is fix'd, and all our days are number'd;
 How long, how short, we know not:—this we
 know,

Duty requires we calmly wait the summons,
 Nor dare to stir till Heav'n shall give permission:
 Like centries that must keep their destin'd stand,
 And wait th' appointed hour, till they're reliev'd.
 Those only are the brave that keep their ground,
 And keep it to the last. To run away
 Is but a coward's trick: to run away
 From this world's ills, that at the very worst
 Will soon blow o'er, thinking to mend ourselves,
 By boldly vent'ring on a world unknown,
 And plunging headlong in the dark;—'tis mad;
 No frenzy half so desperate as this.

TELL us, ye Dead; will none of you, in pity
 To those you left behind, disclose the secret?
 Oh! that some courteous ghost would blab it out;
 What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be.
 I've heard, that souls departed, have sometimes
 Forewarn'd men of their death:—'Twas kindly
 done

To knock, and give the alarm.—But what means
 This stinted charity?—'Tis but lame kindness

That does its work by halves.—Why might you
not

Tell us what 'tis to DIE? Do the strict laws
Of your society forbid your speaking
Upon a point so nice? I'll ask no more:
Sullen, like lamps in sepulchres, your shine
Enlightens but yourselves. Well, 'tis no matter;
A very little time will clear up all,
And make us learn'd as you are, and as close.

DEATH'S SHARPS fly thick—Here falls the
Village-swain,
And there his pamper'd Lord.—The cup goes
round:

And who so artful as to put it by!
'Tis long since DEATH had the majority;
Yet strange! The living lay it not to heart.
See yonder maker of the dead man's bed,
The SEXTON, hoary-headed chronicle,
Of hard unmeaning face, down which ne'er stole
A gentle tear; with mattock in his hand
Digs thro' whole rows of Kindred and acquaintance
By far his juniors.—Scarce a skull's cast up,
But well he knew its Owner, and can tell
Some passage of his life.—Thus hand in hand
The sot has walk'd with DEATH twice twenty
years;

And yet ne'er Yonker on the green laughs louder,
Or club a smuttier tale:—When Drunkards meet,
None sings a merrier catch, or lends a hand
More willing to his cup.—Poor wretch! he minds
not,

That soon some trusty Brother of the trade
Shall do for him what he has done for thousands.

On this side, and on that, men see their friends
 Drop off, like leaves in autumn; yet launch out
 Into fantastic schemes, which the long Livers
 In the world's hale and undegen'rate days
 Could scarce have leisure for.—Fools that we are,
 Never to think of DEATH and of OURSELVES
 At the same time: as if to learn to DIE
 Were no concern of ours.—Oh! more than sottish,
 For creatures of a day in gamesome mood,
 To frolic on Eternity's dread brink
 Unapprehensive; when, for ought we know,
 The very first sworn surge shall sweep us in.
 Think we, or think we not, TIME hurries on
 With a resistless unremitting stream;
 Yet treads more soft than e'er did midnight thief,
 That slides his hand under the miser's pillow,
 And carries off his prize.—What is THIS WORLD?
 What? but a spacious BURIAL FIELD unwall'd,
 Strew'd with Death's spoils, the spoils of animals
 Savage and tame, and full of dead men's bones.
 The very turf on which we tread once liv'd;
 And we that live must lend our carcases
 To cover our own offspring:—In their turns
 They too must cover theirs.—'Tis HERE all meet,
 The shiv'ring ICELANDER, and sunburnt MOOR;
 Men of all climes, that never met before;
 And of all creeds, the JEW, the TURK, the CHRIS-
 TIAN.
 HERE the proud PRINCE, and FAVOURITE yet
 prouder,
 His Sov'reign's keeper, and the people's scourge,
 Are huddled out of sight.—HERE lie abash'd
 The great NEGOTIATORS of the earth,
 And celebrated MASTERS OF THE BALANCE,

Deep read in stratagems, and wiles of courts.
Now vain their TREATY SKILL:—Death scorns to
treat,

HERE the o'er loaded SLAVE flings down his burden
From his gall'd shoulders ;---and when the cruel
Tyrant,

With all his guards and tools of power about him,
Is meditating new unheard-of hardships;
Mocks his short arm ;—and quick as thought escapes
Where Tyrants vex not, and the weary rest.

HERE the warm LOVER, leaving the cool shade,
The tell-tale Echo, and the babbling stream,
(Time out of mind the fav'rite seats of Love,)
Fast by his gentle mistress lays him down,
Unblasted by foul tongue.—HERE friends and foes
Lie close; unmindful of their former feuds.

The lawn-robb'd PRELATE and plain PRESBYTER
E'er while that stood aloof, as shy to meet,
Familiar mingle HERE, like sister streams
That some rude interposing rock had split.
Here is the large-limb'd Peasant:—Here the
Child

Of a span long, that never saw the sun,
Nor press'd the nipple, strangled in life's porch.
Here is the Mother, with her sons and daughters:
The barren Wife, and long demuring Maid
Whose lonely unappointed sweets
Smil'd like yon knot of cowslips on the cliff,
Not to be come at by the willing hand.
Here are the Prude severe, and gay Coquet,
The sober Widow, and the young green Virgin,
Cropp'd like a rose before 'tis fully blown,
Or half its worth disclos'd. Strange medley here!
Here garrulous Old Age winds up his tale;

And jovial Youth, of lightsome vacant heart;
 Whose ev'ry-day was made of melody,
 Hears not the voice of mirth.—The shrill-tongu'd
 Shrew,

Meek as the turtle-dove, forgets her chiding.
 Here are the wise, the generous, and the brave;
 'The just, the good, the worthless, the profane,
 The downright clown, and perfectly well-bred;
 The fool, the churl, the scoundrel, and the mean,
 The supple statesman, and the patriot stern;
 The wrecks of Nations, and the spoils of Time,
 With all the lumber of six thousand years.

Poor Man!—how happy once in thy first state!
 When yet but warm from thy great maker's hand,
 He stamp'd thee with his image, and, well pleas'd,
 Smil'd on his last fair work.—Then all was well.
 Sound was the BODY, and the SOUL serene;
 Like two sweet instruments, ne'er out of tune,
 'That play their several parts.—Nor head, nor
 heart,

Offer'd to achè: nor was their cause they should;
 For all was pure within: no fell remorse,
 Nor anxious castings up of what might be,
 Alarm'd his peaceful bosom,—Summer seas
 Shew not more smooth, when kiss'd by southern
 winds

Just ready to expire—Scarce importun'd,
 'The generous soil, with a luxurious hand,
 Offer'd the various produce of the year,
 And ev'ry thing most perfect in its kind.
 Blessed! thrice blessed days!—But ah! how short!
 Bless'd as the pleasing dreams of Holy Men;
 But fugitive like those, and quickly gone.
 Oh! slipp'ry state of things.—What sudden turns!

What strang vicissitudes in the first leaf
Of man's sad history!—To day most happy,
And ere to-morrow' sun has set, most abject.
How scant the space between these vast extremes!
Thus far'd it with our Sire:—Not long h'enjoy'd
His paradise.—Scarce had the happy tenant
Of the fair spot due time to prove its sweets,
Or sum them up, when strait he must be gone,
Ne'er to return again.—And must he go?
Can nought compound for the first dire offence
Oferring man?—Like one that is condemn'd,
Fain would he trifle time with idle talk,
And parley with his fate.—But 'tis in vain.
Not all the lavish odours of the place,
Offer'd in incense, can procure his pardon,
Or mitigate his doom.—A mighty Angel,
With flaming sword, forbids his longer stay,
And drives the loiterer forth; nor must he take
One last and farewell round.—At once he lost
His glory, and his God.—If mortal now,
And sorely maim'd, no wonder.—Man has sinn'd.
Sick of his bless, and bent on new adventures,
Evil he would needs try: nor try'd in vain.
(Dreadful experiment! destructive measure!
Where the worst thing could happen, is success.)
Alas! too well he sped:—the Good he scorn'd
Stalk'd off reluctant, like an ill us'd ghost,
Not to return;—or if it did, its visits,
Like those of Angels, short and far between:
While the black Daemon, with his hell scrap'd
train,
Admitted once into its better room,
Grew loud and matinous, nor would be gone;
Lording it o'er the Man: who now too late

Saw the rash error, which he could not mend:
 An error fatal not to him alone,
 But to his future sons, his fortune's heirs.
 Inglorious bondage!—Human nature groans
 Beneath a vassalage so vile and cruel,
 And its vast body bleeds thro' ev'ry vein.

WHAT havoc hast thou made, foul monster, Sin!
 Greatest and first of ills.—The fruitful parent
 Of woes of all dimensions!—But for Thee
 Sorrow had never been.—All-noxious Thing,
 Of vilest nature! Other sorts of Evils
 Are kindly circumscrib'd, and have their bounds.
 The fierce Volcano, from his burning entrails
 That belches molten stone and globes of Fire,
 Involv'd in pitchy clouds of smoke and stench,
 Mars the adjacent fields for some leagues round,
 And there it stops.—The big swollen Inundation,
 Of mischief more diffusive, raving loud,
 Buries whole tracks of country, threat'ning more;
 But that too has its shore it cannot pass.
 More dreadful far than these! Sin has laid waste,
 Not here and there a country, but a world:
 Dispatching at a wide-extended blow
 Entire mankind; and for their sakes defacing
 A whole Creation's beauty with rude hands;
 Blasting the foodful grain, the loaded branches,
 And marking all along its way with ruin
 Accursed thing! O! where shall fancy find
 A proper name to call Thee by, expressive
 Of all thy horrors?—Pregnant womb of ills!
 Of temper so transcendently malign,
 That toads and serpents, of most deadly kind,
 Compar'd to thee, are harmless—Sicknesses
 Of every size and symptom, racking pains,

And bluest plagues, are thine.— See how the Fiend
Profusely scatters the contagion round!
Whilst deep-mouth'd Slaughter, bellowing at her
heels,
Wades deep in blood new-spilt; yet for to morrow
Shapes out new work of great uncommon daring,
And inly pines till the dread blow is struck.

BUT hold, I've gone too far; too much discover'd
My Father's nakedness, and nature's shame.
Here let me pause, and drop an honest tear,
One burst of filial duty and condolence,
O'er all those ample deserts Death hath spread,
This Chaos of mankind— O great Man-eater!
Whose ev'ry day is Carnival, not sated yet!
Unheard of Epicure! without a fellow!
The veriest Gluttons do not always cram;
Some intervals of abstinence are sought
To edge the appetite: Thou seekest none.
Methinks the countless swarms thou hast devour'd,
And thousands that each hour thou gobblest up,
This, less than this, might gorge thee to the full.
But ah! rapacious still, thou gap'st for more:
Like one, whole days defrauded of his meals,
On whom Look Hunger lays her skinny hand,
And whets to keenest eagerness his cravings.
As if diseases, massacres, and poison,
Famine, and war, were not thy caterers.

But know, that thou must render up the Dead,
And with high int'rest too.— They are not thine;
But only in thy keeping for a season,
Till the great promis'd day of Restitution;
When loud diffusive sound of brazen trump
Of strong-lung'd Cherub, shall alarm thy Captives,
And rouse the long, long sleepers into life,

Day-light, and liberty.—

Then must thy gates fly open, and reveal
The mines that lay long forming under ground,
In their dark cells immur'd; but now full ripe,
And pure as silver from the crucible,
That twice has stood the torture of the fire
And inquisition of the forge.— We know
Th' illustrious deliverer of mankind,
The Son of God, thee foil'd.— Him in thy pow'r
Thou could'st not hold:—self-vigorous he rose,
And shaking off thy fetters, soon retook
Those spoils his voluntary yielding lent:
(Sure pledge of our releasment from thy thrall!)

'Twice twenty days he sojourn'd here on earth,
And shew'd himself alive to chosen Witnesses,
By proofs so strong, that the most slow assenting
Had not a scruple left.— This having done,
He mounted up to heav'n.— Methinks I see him
Climb the aerial height, and glide along
Athwart the severing clouds; but the faint eye,
Flung backwards in the chace, soon drops its hold;
Disabled quite, and jaded with pursuing.
Heaven's portals wide expand to let him in;
Nor are his friends shut out: As some great Prince
Not for himself alone procures admission,
But for his train.— It was his Royal Will,
That where he is, there should his followers be.
Death only lyes between — A gloomy path!
Made yet more gloomy by our coward fears:
But not untrod, nor tedious: the fatigue
Will soon go off.— Beside, there's no bye-road
To bliss.— Then, why, like ill-condition'd children,
Start we at transient hardships in the way
The leads to purer air, and softer skies,
And a ne'er-setting sun?—Fools that we are!
We wish to be, where sweets unwith'ring bloom;
But strait our wish revoke, and will not go.

So have I seen, upon a summer's ev'n,
 Fast by the riv'let's brink, a youngster play:
 How wishfully he looks to stem the tide!
 'This moment resolute, next unresolv'd:
 At last he dips his foot; but as he dips,
 His fears redouble, and he runs away
 From th' inoffensive stream, unmindful now
 Of all the flow'rs that paint the further bank,
 And smil'd so sweet of late.—Thrice welcome

DEATH!

That after many a painful bleeding step
 Conducts us to our home, and lands us safe
 On the long-wish'd for shore.—Prodigious change!
 Our bane turn'd to a blessing!—DEATH disarm'd,
 Loses his fell-ness quite—All thanks to him
 Who secur'd the venom out.—Sure THE LAST

END

Of the good man is PEACE!—How calm his EXIT!
 Night dews fall not more gently to the ground,
 Nor weary worn out winds expire so soft.
 Behold him in the evening-tide of life,
 A life well-spent, whose early care it was
 His riper years should not upbraid his green:
 By unperceiv'd degrees he wears away;
 Yet, like the sun, seems larger at his setting.
 (High in his faith and hopes,) look how he reaches
 After the prize in view! and, like a bird
 That's hamper'd, struggle's hard to get away:
 Whilst the glad gates of sight are wide expanded
 To let new glories in, the first fair fruits
 Of the fast coming harvest.—THEN! oh THEN!
 Each earth-born joy grows vile, or disappears,
 Shrunken to a thing of nought.—Oh! how he longs
 To have his passport sign'd, and be dismiss'd!

'Tis done! and now he's happy!—The glad SOUL
 Has not a wish uncrown'd.—Ev'n the lag FLESH
 RESTS too IN HOPE of meeting once again
 Its better half, never to sunder more.
 Nor shall it hope in vain:—The time draws on.
 When not a single spot of burial earth,
 Whether on Land, or in the Spacious Sea,
 But must give back its long committed dust
 Inviolat:—and faithfully shall these
 Make up the full account; not the least atom
 Embezzl'd, or mislaid, of the whole tale.
 Each SOUL shall have a BODY ready furnish'd;
 And each shall have his own.—Hence, ye profane!
 Ask not, how this can be?—Sure the same pow'r
 That rear'd the piece at first, and took it down,
 Can re-assemble the loose scatter'd parts,
 And put them as they were.—Almighty God
 Has done much more; nor is his arm impair'd
 Thro' length of days: And what he can he will:
 His Faithfulness stands bound to see it done.
 When the dread trumpet sounds, the slumb'ring
 dust,
 (Not unattentive to the call), shall wake:
 And ev'ry joint possess its proper place,
 With a new elegance of form, unknown
 To its first state —Nor shall the conscious SOUL
 Mistake its partner, but amidst the Croud
 Singling its other half, into its arms
 Shall rush with all th' impatience of a man
 That's new come home, who, having long been
 absent,
 With haste runs over ev'ry different room,
 In pain to see the whole. Thrice happy meeting!
 Nor TIME, nor DEATH, shall ever part them more.

'Tis but a night, a long and moonless night ;
We make the GRAVE our bed, and then are gone.

Thus, at the shut of ev'n, the weary Bird
Leaves the wide air, and in some lonely brake
Cov'rs down, and dozes till the dawn of day,
Then claps his well-fledg'd wings, and bears away,



AN
ELEGY
WRITTEN IN A
COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.
BY MR. GRAY.

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day;
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea;
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his drony flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r
The mopeing owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bow'r
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade.
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their Sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,
If Mem'ry o'er the Tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long drawn isle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of Time, did ne'er unroll:
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of listning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes.

Their lot forbad; nor circumscrib'd alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd
Forbad to wide thro' slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind.

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muses' flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They keep the noiseless tenor of their way

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect;
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhimes and shapeless sculpture deck'd
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their eyes, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted Fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd Dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred Spirit shall enquire thy fate;

Haply some hoary-headed Swain may say,
'Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
'Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
'To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

'There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
'That wreaths its old fantastic roots so high,
'His listless length at noon-tide would he stretch,
'And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

' Hard by yon wood now smiling as in scorn,
 ' Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove
 ' Now drooping, woeful, wan, like one forlorn,
 ' Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

' One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
 ' Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree ;
 ' Another came ; nor yet beside the rill,
 ' Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he.

' The next with dirges due, in sad array
 ' Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him
 boine.
 ' Approach, and read (for thou canst read) the lay
 ' Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.

THE EPITAPH.

HERE rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
 A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown ;
 Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
 And melancholy mark'd him for her own

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere.
 Heav'n did a recompence as largely send :
 He gave to mis'ry all he had, a tear,
 He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
 Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
 There they alike in trembling hope repose)
 The bosom of his Father and his God.

FINIS.

